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It is generally considered that marriage to a representative of the resident population is a sign of acceptance. Why were Norwegian males more attractive to Amsterdam women than Norwegian women to Amsterdam men? Again we can only speculate. Only seven percent of the Norwegian brides could sign their name, as against thirty-five percent of the Norwegian bridegrooms. Perhaps this indicates that men were more competitive on the particular male labour market, the sailors' market, and hence also on the marriage market? Even as a widower the Norwegian males were more attractive on the marriage market than their widowed countrywomen. The women who married, married almost invariably a sailor and settled in the quarters near the docks. The groom and bride usually lived in the same street at the moment of the wedding, but this cannot reliably be taken an indication of cohabitation. It rather meant that they were living in the same neighbourhood or in close proximity.

It is interesting to speculate on the crucial significance of the female migrant for an assessment of the phenomenon of migration in general and for its lasting nature. The woman may be regarded as the stable, locally based person in the marriage. Women stayed longer in Amsterdam and had a stronger attachment to the congregation, before marriage. The brides also seem to have had more local family, as can be seen from the witnesses at the banns: The period investigated, 1700-1720, represents a fairly late stage of the emigration. The marrying couple thus might well have had older relatives in Amsterdam, who had emigrated at an earlier date, and acted as supporting contacts for the newcomers. Thirty percent of the grooms had relatives as witnesses, but nearly half of the brides did. Being stably settled in Amsterdam after marriage, the women were able to act as a family focal point.

Information gleaned from the Norwegian judicial records shows some of these women hiring out rooms to sailors and travellers, as well as acting as keepers of valuables for sailors who were away to the Indies on trips lasting several years. Perhaps some Norwegian women even functioned as pawnbrokers and lenders, for such women are found in Amsterdam at this time. We know for a fact that some of these women had ready money in hand. If the husband was away at sea and he had arranged for his wife to get part of his wages, we can find her signature for the amount in the still extant ledgers of the *voc*.

Future research will hopefully bring forth more information on the intriguing subject of Norwegian – and Scandinavian – emigration to the Netherlands in the early modern period. Maybe we may come to grips with this research through blood typing – which has become so popular in Viking research!

Poor, Illiterate and Superstitious?

Social and Cultural Characteristics of the 'Noordse Natie' in the Amsterdam Lutheran Church in the Seventeenth Century

ERIKA KUIJPERS

Introduction

Thanks to the work of Sølvi Sogner and Oddleif Hodne we know that thousands of Norwegians went to Holland during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹ However, this is not a historical fact that is common knowledge in the Netherlands. When asked about immigrants in seventeenth-century Holland, a Dutch respondent would probably think of French Huguenots. To others it will ring a bell if you mention Flemish refugees. The great Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel came from the Southern Netherlands, just as many famous painters, architects and writers. The history the Portuguese Jews who settled in Amsterdam is also well known. Religious or political refugees in particular seem to have made a mark on Dutch seventeenth-century history and culture.² Within their ranks one finds a relatively numerous middle class and elite of rich merchants, entrepreneurs, artists, writers and scientists who influenced the economic and cultural life during the Dutch Golden Age. Reading the literature about immigrants in Amsterdam we can safely say that various nationalities have made an uneven impact on Dutch history. The migration of Norwegians was very different. Although they came in

1 O. Hodne, *Fra Agder til Amsterdam. En studie av norsk emigrasjon til Nederland i tiden ca. 1625-1800* (Oslo 1976); S. Sogner, *Ung i Europa. Norsk ungdom over Nordsjøen til Nederland i tidlig nytid* (Oslo 1994); Summarized in English in S. Sogner, 'Young in Europe around 1700: Norwegian sailors and servant-girls seeking employment in Amsterdam' in: J.P. Bardet, F. Lebrun and R. le Mée eds., *Mesurer et comprendre. Mélanges en l'honneur de Jacques Dupaquier* (Paris 1993) 515-532.

2 To name just a few titles: J. Briels, *De Zuidnederlandse immigratie in Amsterdam en Haarlem omstreeks 1572-1630. Met een keuze van archivalische gegevens betreffende de kunstschilders* (Utrecht 1976); Idem, *De Zuidnederlandse immigratie 1572-1630* (Haarlem 1978); Idem, *De Zuid-Nederlanders in de Republiek 1572-1630: Een demografische en cultuurhistorische studie* (Sint-Niklaas 1985); H. Bots and G. Posthumus Meyes eds., *La Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes et les Provinces Unies 1685: Colloque international du tricentenaire* (Amsterdam and Maarsen 1986); H. Bots, G. Posthumus Meyes and F. Wieringa, *Vlucht naar de vrijheid. De Hugenoten en de Nederlanden* (Amsterdam and Dieren 1985); J.I. Israel, 'The economic contribution of Dutch Sephardic Jewry to Holland's Golden Age, 1595-1713', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 96 (1983) 505-535; R.G. Fuks Mansfeld, *De Sefardim in Amsterdam tot 1795. Aspecten van een joodse minderheid in een Hollandse stad* (Hilversum 1989); J.C.H. Blom, R.G. Fuks Mansfeld and I. Schöffer eds., *Geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland* (Amsterdam 1995); J. Michman, 'Historiography of the Jews in the Netherlands' in: *Dutch Jewish history. Proceedings of the symposium on the history of the Jews in the Netherlands, 1982* (Jerusalem 1984) 7-29; Y. Kaplan, 'Amsterdam and Ashkenazic migration in the seventeenth century', *Studia Rosenthaliana* 23, 2 (1989) supplement 22-40; Idem, 'The Portuguese community in seventeenth century Amsterdam and the Ashkenazi world' in: J. Michman ed., *Dutch Jewish history: proceedings of the fourth symposium on the history of the Jews in the Netherlands 7-10 December - Tel-Aviv - Jerusalem 1986 II* (Jerusalem and Assen 1989) 23-45.

large numbers and settled in the cities, they seem to have made less of an impression on contemporary chroniclers.

Between 1570 and 1670, Amsterdam's population grew from about 30,000 to 200,000 inhabitants. The labour market of the prospering coastal provinces of the Dutch Republic, with Amsterdam as their main port and economic centre, attracted migrants from all over Europe. The most important areas of origin were the northern and eastern Dutch provinces, the German coastal areas, the territories along the river Rhine, the Southern Netherlands under Spanish rule, and the Scandinavian coastal regions.³

Most modern historians would describe the Norwegian immigrants as 'labour migrants', or 'migratory workers'.⁴ They are supposed to have been young people, who individually left their hometowns and villages in Norway in search of work and experience abroad. Most of them ended up as sailors, soldiers and maidservants. The objective of their leaving home was probably to save as much money as possible and to settle independently or marry as soon as they returned. Many of them, however, never returned but settled permanently in Holland.

The Lutheran Church in Amsterdam

Many of the Norwegian immigrants became members of the Lutheran Church in Amsterdam.

Founded around 1588 by Lutheran refugees from Antwerp and dominated by Germans, this church became a typical migrants' church in the course of the seventeenth century.⁵ The ministers serving the Lutheran parish had studied at Ger-

³ A recent overview of the migration movements and estimated numbers can be found in J. Lucassen, 'Holland, een open gewest. Immigratie en bevolkingsontwikkeling', in: Th. de Nijs and E. Beukers eds., *Geschiedenis van Holland II 1572-1795* (Hilversum 2002) 181-215; Details of his calculations are published in: Jan Lucassen, 'Immigranten in Holland 1600-1800. Een kwantitatieve benadering', Working paper 3 in a series working papers published by the Centrum voor de Geschiedenis van Migranten (CGM) (Amsterdam 2002).

⁴ J. Lucassen and R. Penninx, *Nieuwkomers, nakomelingen, Nederlanders. Immigranten in Nederland 1550-1993* (Amsterdam 1994) 29-30; Among the so-called 'labour migrants' semi-permanent settlers can be distinguished from transitory labourers who temporarily left home to do seasonal work in agriculture or work on dikes, canals etc.. In the city they might have been involved in house building; A. Knotter, 'Vreemdelingen in Amsterdam in de 17e eeuw: Groepsvorming, arbeid en ondernemerschap', *Historisch Tijdschrift Holland* 27 (1995) 219-235, especially 219.

⁵ See for the history of the Amsterdam Lutheran Church during the early period: F.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, *Geschiedenis der Amsterdamsche Luthersche Gemeente* (Amsterdam 1856); J.W. Pont, *Geschiedenis van het Lutheranisme in de Nederlanden tot 1618* (Haarlem 1911); J. Happee, J.L.J. Meiners and M. Mostert eds., *De Lutheranen in Amsterdam 1588-1988* (Hilversum 1988); J. Loosjes, *Geschiedenis van de Lutherse Kerk in de Nederlanden* (The Hague 1921); C.Ch.G. Visser, *De Lutheranen in Nederland. Tussen Katholicisme en Calvinisme, 1566 tot heden* (Dieren 1983); P. Estié, *De stichting van een kerkgenootschap: ontstaan en aanvaarding van het algemeen reglement van 1818 voor het bestuur der Evangelisch-Lutherse kerk in het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden* (Amsterdam 1982) especially pages 9-16; Idem, *Het plaatselijk bestuur van de Nederlandse Lutherse gemeenten. Ontstaan en ontwikkeling in de jaren 1566 tot 1686* (Amsterdam 1987); and idem, *Lutheranen in Nederland. Fragmenten uit hun geschiedenis* (Utrecht 2002).

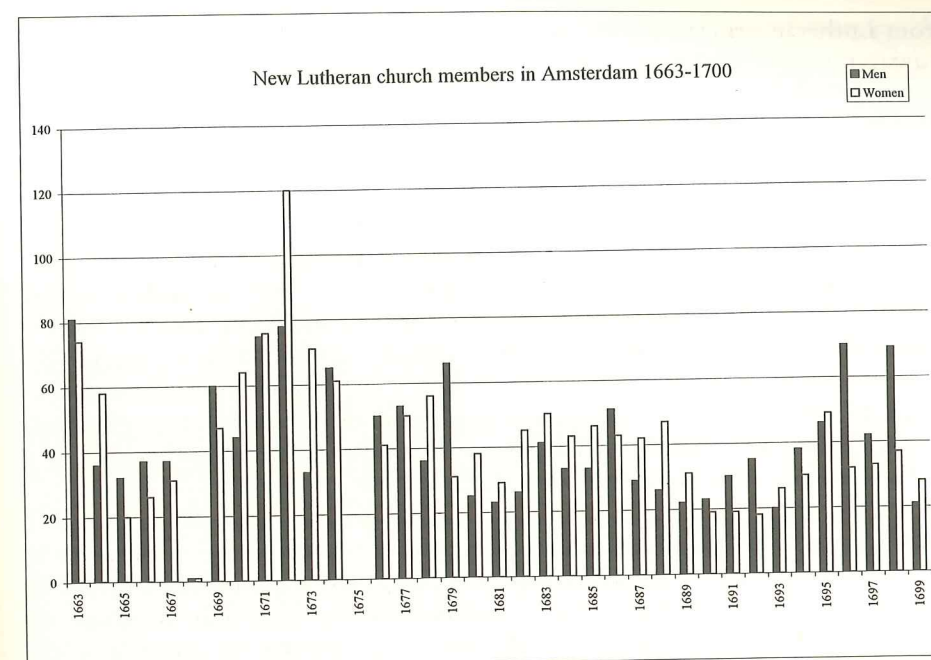


Figure 7. Source: GAA 213 inv. nos. 508-542. Lists of newly arrived church members during the years 1663-1700. The year 1668 is incomplete, 1675 is missing.

man Universities and most of them preached in German. From the 1640s onwards, the Norwegians and Danes, the 'Noordse Natie' or Nordic Nation as they were called, formed a growing minority within the Lutheran Church.

In 1626, only two percent of all Lutheran church members were of Scandinavian origin, and in the years between 1626 and about 1640, five percent of the new members were Scandinavian.⁶ But in the new register of church members that starts in 1663, almost a quarter of all new Lutheran church members were Scandinavian, fourteen percent originating from Norway. In total, we counted 1487 men and 1533 women from Norway who joined the Lutheran Church in Amsterdam between 1663 and 1700.⁷

Many German and a small number of Scandinavian immigrants were successful merchants and entrepreneurs, diplomats or specialised craftsmen. The church's elite had close relations with influential persons in the United Provinces, in Germany and Scandinavia, and the church received financial and political support

⁶ Municipal Archives Amsterdam (hereafter GAA), no 213, Archive of the Lutheran Church, inv. no. 507, Register of church members 1626. Only fifty-three men and forty-five women were immigrants from Norway.

⁷ Ibidem, inv. nos. 508-542. Lists of newly arrived church members during the years 1663-1700. The names and places of origin of these church members were collected by Mr. R. and Mr. J.G. Voortman, who kindly let me make use of their data. In total 3,026 Norwegians including six of unknown sex. Sexeratio: ninety-seven men per 100 women.

from Lutheran princes abroad. A relatively large part of the church members, however, consisted of minor craftsmen and labourers in the harbours and textile industry, sailors and maidservants. Their share increased with the growth of the Scandinavian immigration in the second half of the seventeenth century. On the other hand, the second and following generations born in Amsterdam were leaving the church. By the end of the seventeenth century they still formed only a quarter of the community. Many of the Lutheran children no longer felt at home in the German-speaking and quite conservative migrant church. They spoke Dutch and married partners from other denominations. The loss of these settled middle class members formed a serious problem (also financially) for the church, especially since the influx of new members was of a very proletarian character. By 1650, the Lutheran Church was seen as a church for the poor by the Amsterdam charitable institutions. In 1668 the city's overseers of the poor wrote to the burgomasters that three fourth of their registered poor consisted of Lutherans.⁸

The Lutheran Church tried to reverse these developments. In 1648, the church council decided that Dutch would be the official language of the church, since a growing number of members could no longer understand German.⁹ The Lutheran bible was translated into Dutch and the clergymen were forced to preach in Dutch. Several of them refused to do so for many years.¹⁰ Part of the congregation reacted with letters and other forms of protest. It seems that the Norwegian immigrants were not involved in this, possibly because they may have had just as many difficulties understanding Dutch as German. More generally, they do not seem to have been involved, let alone consulted, in any discussion on the policy of the Lutheran Church in Amsterdam. Although they formed a growing minority within the church, they were never mentioned in the church records until 1663.

The Danish Church

In 1663, the Danish and Norwegians in Amsterdam – it is not always clear who exactly was meant since one and the same king governed both countries, both nations could understand each other's language, and they were often referred to as the Nordic Nation – suddenly undertook a revolutionary act by organizing their own services in Danish, without even informing the church council.¹¹ The self-proclaimed preacher was one Christiaan Pietersz Abel, who had been born near Aalborg in Denmark. He claimed to have studied theology in Copenhagen. He

⁸ GAA 5024, Archive of the burgomasters of Amsterdam, inv. no. 19, 16 April 1668, f. 11.

⁹ GAA 213, Archive of the Lutheran Church, inv. no. 19, Records of the church council, 21 April 1648, f. 37.

¹⁰ Many clergymen experienced difficulties learning Dutch, others were opposed to the idea and knew an important part of the congregation supported them. See *ibidem*, the church records from 1648 to 1660, inv. nos. 19 and 20, *passim*.

¹¹ The records concerning this Danish church are gathered in one file. GAA 213, inv. no. 737, Documents concerning the Abel Affair. Letter from the Nordic and Danish people to the burgomasters of Amsterdam, 7 February 1663.

and his followers also said they had the support of certain men of learning, although they refused to name them. In the literature on the history of the Lutheran Church in Amsterdam, it is usually assumed that Abel was in contact with pietists, one of whom was Frederich Breckling in the Dutch town of Zwolle.¹² In the assembly of the church council on 12 September 1663, the Danes were accused of having invited this Breckling to Amsterdam. It was rumoured that Breckling had been preaching for the Nordic congregation in German. From this, the church council concluded that the language problem of the Danes was not the real reason for their initiative, but that they were seeking to split the church and bring unrest to the congregation.¹³ These suspicions were probably the reason why the church council was immediately on the highest state of alert. They called on all the authorities they could think of to prevent Abel from continuing his activities. Diplomats and theological authorities within and outside the Dutch Republic were asked for advice. The information concerning Abel was far from reassuring. He was illiterate and ignorant and branded a cheat by all concerned.

The Danish congregation naturally claimed to be innocent of any wrongdoing. They twice sent a request to the burgomasters of Amsterdam. In the first, dated February 1663 and signed by forty-five men, they pleaded for their own minister, arguing that they did not understand enough German to follow the essence of the sermons. Therefore, 'they had, to their regret, remained in many sins without even knowing this was so', while they could improve their lives if they were to be instructed in their mothers' tongue.¹⁴ In September 1663, a second petition was submitted to the burgomasters. The burgomasters had not given permission to organize separate services, but a refusal of the first request had not been received either. Therefore, this letter stated, the Nordic congregation had appointed a minister and made the necessary expenditures in order to organize her own services. Saturday 25 August 1663, when the Scandinavians learned that the Burgomasters intended to prohibit their gatherings altogether, the 'poor people' burst out crying and lamenting. 'They pitied themselves being treated even worse than the Jews, and other nations in this city, in a way that, if Your Honoured would have seen and heard so, Your Honoured would have felt great compassion with these poor people.'¹⁵ Again, they underlined that they only requested to be instructed

¹² Domela Nieuwenhuis, *Geschiedenis*, 94.

¹³ '... ende dat men deswegen genoegsaam conde speuren dat het niet soo seer om het Deens prediken te doen was als wel omme dese gemeente te scheuren ende in onrust te brengen'. GAA 213, inv. no. 20, Records of the church council, 12 September 1663, f. 629-630.

¹⁴ '... in meenighvuldige onwetende sonden tot haer leetwesen Godt betert vervallen, die se (: in haer moeders tale bestraft werdende) misschien soude connen voorbijgaen ...'. GAA 213, inv. no. 737. The same letter of 7 February 1663 as mentioned before.

¹⁵ '... soo is daer groote jammer ende weclagen onder het arm volckskken ontstaen, bleven buijten het predickhuijs staen hertelijck wenende ende sig beklagende ellendiger daer aen te sijn dan de Joden, ende andere Natien in dese stadt, soo dat wanneer U E sulx gesien ende gehoord hadden, soude U E groote innerlijcke compassie met d'arme luijden gehadt hebben.' *Ibidem*, letter from the Nordic Nation to the burgomasters, handed over to the Lutheran church council on 11 September.

and comforted in their own tongue for the single reason that they did not properly understand another language.

The consistory somehow managed to obtain a copy of this petition and immediately wrote a letter to the burgomasters as well. For obvious reasons, the incompetence and dubious sympathies of Abel were elaborated upon again, but the consistory also denied that the Danes and Norwegians had any language difficulties. After all, German and Dutch had been preached in the Lutheran Church for over seventy years, there had always been numerous Danes, Swedes and Norwegians among the congregation – which was not true, Scandinavian immigration was relatively recent – but never before had any complaints been voiced. On the other hand, the consistory underlined repeatedly that the followers of Abel consisted of poor and simple folk, mostly sailors and maidservants, who were easily misled by suspect characters, like Abel. They also emphasised that the more notable and honourable Danes and Norwegians kept their distance from the separatist movement. The letter of the consistory to the burgomasters states moreover that two thirds of the Lutheran poor were Danes and Norwegians who were receiving thousands of guilders poor relief, financed by the Dutch and German members in the community. If the Nordic congregation would insist on having their services separately, the consistory threatened to exclude the Danish and Norwegian poor from the charity supplied by the Lutheran Church. They would thus become a burden on the city's public charity.¹⁶

The invasion of a Lutheran labour force

The Abel-affair throws a very interesting light on the social composition of the Lutheran congregation. In the correspondence of both the Nordic Nation and the German-Dutch consistory with the burgomasters of Amsterdam, the Danes and Norwegians were described as simple folk, poor people and so forth. They were said to be sailors and maidservants, illiterate, ignorant, and easy to mislead. Besides, they formed two thirds of the Lutheran poor receiving charity of the church.

These statements did not stand alone. During the years 1640 to 1670, a period marked by the mass immigration of both German and Scandinavian labour migrants in Amsterdam, the Lutheran consistory also received complaints concerning the disorder in the church during the services and confirmation classes. The church officers in many ways felt the growing scale of the church organization. The old church building had become too small to house the entire congregation on Sundays. The services and confirmation classes passed noisily and chaotically, just as the examination of members before the communion. The clergymen complained about the numbers of sick people they had to visit at home.¹⁷ In several

¹⁶ Ibidem, letter from the Lutheran church council to the burgomasters (no date, probably also September 1663).

¹⁷ GAA 213, inv. no. 20, Records of the church council, 19 October 1661, f. 515-516.

letters dating from the 1640s and 1650s, worries are expressed about the loss of moral standards of the congregation.¹⁸ One of the ministers, *Dominee* Hoppe, considered extra classes in bible reading and catechism absolutely necessary, since the educational level of the newly arriving members was extremely poor.¹⁹ In 1663, precentor Caspar Caspari complained of the abuse of the so-called *voorbedriefjes*. These were small forms on which the churchgoers could note a motivated request for a prayer, and which could be deposited in wooden boxes fixed on the church doors before the service began. The precentor sorted the requests and copied them, to be read during the service. In reality however, Caspari complained, things proceeded in a far less orderly manner. During the sermon, the notes were flying through the air and fell down on the heads of the audience, which of course was seriously distracted. Some of the notes just fell on the ground, but others were caught by the audience. Sometimes, something dirty was folded in these letters or they contained nasty proposals or stupid jokes.²⁰ Others were full of abuse, accusing him, Caspari, of praying exclusively for the rich. Caspari was really upset about the superstition, the lack of understanding and the ingratitude of people. Before every sermon, he wrote, 'they want to have noted down all cities and countries their beloved ones travelled to. Otherwise, the Lord would not know where they are. But I cannot do this in so little time.'²¹ Worst of all were the seafarers and travellers, 'who promise the Lord many things when they are in distress, but who have forgotten everything as soon as they have returned home safely. Most of them say their words of thanks in the alehouses and wine bars'.²²

In 1666, minister Hoppe discussed the educational level of the Norwegians and Danes in the assembled consistory. On the days the communicants were examined in public, hundreds and hundreds of Norwegians and Danes appeared, but Hoppe could not discover whether they were qualified and fit to receive the Lord's Supper. Most of the time, they were too diffident and confused to give a

¹⁸ See e.g. the many complaints in the correspondence of the church during that same period. GAA 213, inv. no. 92, Correspondence.

¹⁹ GAA 213, inv. no. 20, 16 March 1661, f. 458. A week later it is decided that the precentor and the 'ziekentrooster' will teach the catechism on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Ibidem, 30 March 1661, f. 460-461.

²⁰ GAA 213, inv. no. 94, Correspondence, Letter from Caspar Caspari to the church council, 22 August 1663.

²¹ 'Zij willen alle predikatie opgeschreven hebben de steeden Landen plaetsen waer dat haere heenen ghereyst zijn. Anders soude Godt de heer niet weten waer dat se zijn, het welke mij onmogelijk is te doen in soo korten tijt'. Ibidem.

²² '[De]... seevarende ende reysende lieden die Godt den heer veel belooven als sij in groote nooden zijn maer als sij behouden thuijs comen soo is dat al vergeeten. Veele van dese die doen haer danckseggingeh in Bier wijn tobacks ofte brandewijnshuysen ... Daer zijn veel hondert in Nooden ende op periculuese reysen daer alle weke voor gebeden wordt inde kercken, maer daer zijn geen negen die wederom komen ende Godt daervoor dancken. Komt het noch soo hoogh soo senden sij een briefjen naer de kerck maer selven konnen sij niet comen, daer moet onse lieve heere godt mede te vreden zijn'. Ibidem.

reasonable answer. Part of the problem was that the many onlookers started to laugh when an answer was wrong.²³

Norwegian immigrants: social characteristics

The fact that the new Norwegian church members had little knowledge of their faith is not surprising in the light of their literacy levels. By the end of the century, about seventy percent of all Amsterdam bridegrooms could sign their marriage banns. But the average literacy level of the Norwegian grooms from Bergen remained between forty and fifty percent, while only twenty to thirty percent of the men from Risør and Mandal could write their name. Among Norwegian women literacy was extremely low. While fifty per cent of the Amsterdam brides could sign their marriage banns in 1700, only eight to ten percent of the women from Bergen, and none of the women from Mandal and Risør could write their names.²⁴ In the early eighteenth century, the literacy level of Stavanger men was still thirty-five percent, and seven percent for the women.²⁵

We should not draw conclusions from this data on the educational level in Norway at the time. Rather, we should conclude that Norwegian immigrants belonged to a specific social category. During the seventeenth century, eighty-five percent of the Norwegian bridegrooms were sailors.²⁶ This social homogeneity was unique. The Norwegian men, who stayed ashore in the Netherlands, were mainly labourers in the harbour or involved in house construction, textile industry or they were common craftsmen, like cobblers. Most of the Norwegian women probably found work as maidservants. However, little is known on female labour and we should take into account that many women were involved in textile industry and in small retail trades. It seems significant that many of the Norwegian brides were living in the poor harbour districts at their first marriage, just like their future husbands. Work opportunities for living-in servants in burgher households must be considered very scarce in that neighbourhood so that cannot explain their presence here. Both men and women were employed in mar-

23 'Dat bij het doen ende houden van de publieque examen der communicanten deser gemeente hondert en hondert Nooren ende Deenen quamen die hij niet konde oordeelen of bequaem ende geschickt waren omme de hrn H Avontmael te ontfangen ofte niet Vmidts veeltijds soodanigh waren gealtereert ende geconfundeert dat men naeu eenigh geraisonneert antwoort van de selve conde becomen het welck hij hr Hop. oordeelde ten deele te ontstaen door het bijsijn van de veelheijt der omstanders ende toehoorders waervan somtijds eenige soo wanneer niet wel geantwoordt wiert daer mede lachten ende den spot hielden ...'. GAA 213 inv. no. 21 Records church council, 12 May 1666, f. 16r-v.

24 GAA 883, inv. no. 708 and Erika Kuipers, 'Lezen en schrijven. Onderzoek naar het alfabetiseringsniveau in zeventiende-eeuws Amsterdam', *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 23 (1997), 490-522; The literacy level of all men in the sample of 1700 was 73 percent, for women 50.5 percent; GAA marriage bans, DTB nos. 680-681, 701-702.

25 Sogner, 'Young in Europe', 523.

26 GAA 883, Archives S. Hart, inv. no. 707. Between 1586 and 1710, 4,149 out of 4,881 Norwegian men were sailors.

ginal professions that allowed for survival. At the same time these people were very vulnerable in times of economic crisis. Personal misfortune such as illness or the loss of a breadwinner, could lead to a life in poverty. The characterisation of Norwegian migrants as belonging to 'the very lowest social strata', seems justified.²⁷

Compared to other migrant groups in Amsterdam such as the Frisians, the Germans from the northern coastal area, Münsterland, the Lower Rhine area, the migrants from the Dutch provinces Gelderland and Overijssel, the integration of Norwegian immigrants in urban society apparently proceeded in another way. For example, both immigrants from the Dutch Provinces and those from the German areas were often involved in mixed marriages. Norwegian men and women, on the contrary, belonged to the most endogamous groups of Amsterdam comparable only with the Jews and the wealthy merchant families of Antwerp in the beginning of the seventeenth century.²⁸ In 1650, sixty-seven percent of the Scandinavian men and women intermarried and in 1700 almost half of the men and eleven out of fifteen women.²⁹ The absolute numbers in these samples are small, but the pattern is confirmed by Sogner's figures for Stavanger migrants between 1710 and 1720.³⁰ The inward looking orientation seems to be confirmed by the spatial concentration of Norwegian immigrants in a few Amsterdam neighbourhoods near the harbour. While the descendants of the early seventeenth century migrants from the Southern Netherlands lived in the first working-class area of Amsterdam, 'the Jordaan', west of the old city centre, and Dutch and German immigrants spread across the whole city, the neighbourhoods at the east-side of the city – the 'Lastage', and more to the east the islands 'Rapenburg', 'Uilenburg' and later 'Kattenburg' as well – became the district where large numbers of Northern-German, Danish and Norwegian immigrants settled, with the last group showing the highest concentration rates.³¹

It is hard to establish what the decisive causes were for this characteristic Norwegian settlement process. The possible reasons for the relative high level of endogamy, for instance, are manifold. One could think of cultural reasons. The language may have been a barrier for marrying partners of different origins and the fact that most Norwegians were Lutherans may have limited their options. Besides, the social composition of the migrant group, as well as mechanisms of in-

27 Sogner, 'Young in Europe', 526.

28 See N. Al and C. Lesger, '"Twee volken [...] besloten binnen Amstels wallen"? Antwerpse migranten in Amsterdam omstreeks 1590', *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 21 (1995) 129-144.

29 The data bases used here contain a systematical selection of banns that concern the first marriage of both spouses, both living in Amsterdam, from the years 1650 and 1700. For both years this meant registration of varying every eight and ninth act in order to get databases of about 500 persons each.

30 Sogner, 'Young in Europe', 523.

31 This is based on the addresses of marriage partners in the Amsterdam marriage bans, the sample of 1650 (see footnote above) and the work of Clé Lesger: 'Migranten in Amsterdam tijdens de 18e eeuw: residentiële spreiding en positie in de samenleving', *Jaarboek Amstelodamum* 89 (1997) 41-68.

clusion and exclusion in Amsterdam, or the type of migration may contribute to an explanation. In general, marriage with a local freeman's daughter or widow was a great help for integration on the labour market for craftsmen, since they would receive Amsterdam citizenship for free and in the latter case also the membership of a guild, a workshop and a business network all in one sweep. Guild membership, however, was not required for wage-labour. Since most Norwegian men worked as day labourers, dockhands, sailors or construction workers, a union with a native bride would not be of special advantage to them. On the contrary, if they intended to return home after a few years, they should rather choose a partner with the same expectations for the future. The reason for the specific marriage pattern of the Scandinavian migrants may therefore stem from the type of migration.

Indeed, many Norwegians were migratory workers who probably intended to return home after some years of earning good money in Holland. However, not all of them succeeded in doing so. The fact alone, that so many of them married, is telling. Many married couples would have children. Many sailors died at sea. Only one third returned from their trip to Asia with the Dutch East India Company (VOC). What happened with the families that were left behind? It may be telling that between 1636-1651, 900 sailors bought citizenship, among whom also quite some Norwegians. Citizenship was not only a precondition for guild membership, but also offered entitlements to several types of provision, such as poor relief and care for orphans in the city's burgher orphanage.³² In 1681, the overseers of the poor at the *Oudezijds Huiszittenhuis* wrote that half of the poor that received aid during winter, were wives and children of men at sea. They warned that if sailors' families were not entitled to the city's public relief, the Admiralty would have great difficulties recruiting personnel in case of another war. The Admiralty even successfully requested at the Amsterdam burgomasters to withdraw an earlier ordinance in which the Lutheran poor were excluded from relief by the civil chests in wintertime.³³

The Lutheran Church, which was held responsible for the care of their poor members, in turn complained to the burgomasters that this was unfair, because the church had to cope with a relatively large share of the city's poor. For lack of financial resources, they were forced to send most of the Lutheran poor to the city's public charitable institutions. On several occasions, they added to their argument, that the city needed these people and therefore should share the burden of poor relief. A nice example is the letter from the Lutheran church elders to the burgomasters, in which they asked permission to build a new Lutheran orphanage.³⁴ Thanks to the city's freedom of religion, they wrote, many Lutherans from

³² GAA, Poorterboek E (gekochte poorters 1636-1652). See on the 'proletarianizing' of Amsterdam citizenship: E. Kuijpers and M. Prak, 'Burger ingezetenen, vreemdeling: burgerschap in Amsterdam in de 17e en 18e eeuw', in: J. Kloek and K. Tilmans eds., *Burger. Een geschiedenis van het begrip 'burger' in de Nederlanden van de Middeleeuwen tot de 21^{ste} eeuw* (Amsterdam 2002) 113-132.

³³ GAA 349, Archive of the city's civil chests, the Huiszittenhuizen, inv. no. 1, Records of the 'Huiszittenmeesters Oude Zijde' 1639-1703, March 1681, f. 148-155, esp. f. 166.

³⁴ GAA 213, inv. no. 94, Correspondence, 8 October 1686.

northern areas moved to Amsterdam to serve the country, especially at sea. If these people were assured that their children would be raised and educated in their own religion in case their parents died prematurely, they would have even more reason to come over. The elders reminded the burgomasters that the fleet was largely depending on Lutheran labour, and that among their nation were also many diggers, porters, dock-hands and so on, who spent a great deal of their earnings again in the city, thus contributing to the city's revenues from excises.³⁵

Conclusion

Migration from Norway to Amsterdam was a movement from the periphery to the economic and cultural centre of Europe and from an agrarian society to a capitalist metropolis. It is part of that pattern that, as Sølvi Sogner has demonstrated, most of the migrants were of agrarian background. Their slow integration in Amsterdam society suggests that many of them hoped to return home after some years of earning Dutch wages. A more realistic perspective, however, was a grave at sea or on one of the urban graveyards in the poor neighbourhoods of Amsterdam. For many Norwegians, their migration was part of, or the final step in a process of proletarianization. They had to accommodate, not only to life in a foreign country, but also to the urban environment of Amsterdam, in those days one of the largest cities of Europe. The huge numbers of migrants arriving from Norway and other Scandinavian regions also added to the integration problems that occurred in the Lutheran Church in the 1640s to 1660s. They were poor, unskilled, working people, illiterate, superstitious and a burden on the church's finances. To the German-Dutch middle class who dominated the Lutheran community, the Norwegian immigrants were seen as far below their own class.

³⁵ Ibidem.